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Psychological readiness of future educational psychologists for the work with children in the conditions of inclusive education

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Abstract

Statement of problem: inclusive education in Turkey and Kazakhstan is one of the priority directions of the development of all education system. Intensive development of system of inclusive education in our developing countries determine the need for revision and change of process of psychological preparation of professionals for education of children with special educational needs at school. In December, 2013 at the international conference in Turkey the government representatives of 20 Central and Eastern European countries and of Central Asia expressed the political support to inclusive education, as the only opportunity to provide the right of disabled children for quality education. Realization of inclusive education in practice faces many difficult questions and problems. In this regard, the need of studying of psychological readiness of future teachers for work with children in the conditions of inclusive education represent the significant part of their professional readiness. Research objectives: identification of level of psychological readiness of future educational psychologists for the work with children in the conditions of inclusive education and also the development of training program. Methods: the following techniques were used in the research: "Assessment of mental tension" (T.A.Nemchin), "Ability of the teacher to empathy", "Assessment of sociability level". Results: the research conducted by us showed that an important problem of the development of inclusive education is unpreparedness of future educational psychologists of secondary school to work with children with special educational needs. They aren't ready to create the most comfortable environment for all students as they keep stereotypes in the attitude towards disabled children, various psychological barriers in communication and interaction with such children and their parents. Conclusion: Special importance in this context is gained by a problem of psychological readiness of future experts for work with children in the conditions of inclusive education which is understudied and demands detailed research. Recommendations: Solving the problems of psychological readiness of future educational psychologists for work with children with special needs will allow to intensively enter inclusive education in the country; increase the level of professional competence of graduates, i.e. will satisfy inquiries of all consumers of educational services - persons, societies, states.

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1. Introduction

In the modern conditions the important direction of modernization of education system is the integration of children with limited health opportunities in mass secondary schools. In the conditions of introduction of inclusive education it was found out that modern schools and kindergartens aren't ready to accept children with special educational needs. The problem consists not only in creation of the adapted education environment (the room, the equipment, etc.), but also in absence of experts trained for implementation of inclusive education of children. The integrated education demands from teachers an adequate attitude towards the special child in children's collective, ability to provide him a psychological and pedagogical support, and also an ability to open creative potential of each child.

In this connection, there is a question of need of high-quality preparation of pedagogical staff for inclusive educational institutions. High-quality realization of educational needs of each child irrespective of his physical, mental and intellectual capacities depends on competences of professional staff.

The analysis of psychology and pedagogical literature showed that many authors (Weiler, Koynov, Lefsted, Matyash, Serikov, Raven, Whyte, Chinapakh, Aleynikova, Shmatko, Denisova, Ponikarova, Lekhanova, Menlibekova, Kenzhebekov, etc.) emphasise on the important component of professional competence of educational psychologists: psychological readiness for pedagogical work with children in the conditions of inclusive education.

2. The essence of the concept of "readiness."

Despite distinction in approaches to determination of psychological readiness, most authors proceed from a common position that it is the "difficult synthetic construct" consisting of a complex of the various, interconnected elements.

Readiness literally means two values. The first is a consent to make something as the voluntary and conscious decision directed to activity; the second — as a description of a state at which everything is ready for something and which will provide implementation of the decision (Vorobyova, 2011).

The leading component of readiness is a psychological readiness which is understood as complex construct, as an alloy of functional and personal components providing motivational and mental readiness and ability of the subject to implementation of professional activity.

3. The essence of the psychological readiness

Psychological readiness is traditionally understand as a mental phenomenon by means of which the stability of activity of the person in polymotivated space is explained:

- in the form of mindset (as projections of last experience to a situation "here and now"), the conscious assessments of the situation and behaviour caused by the previous experience.
- in the form of motivational readiness (opportunity to realize sense and value of what he does);
- in the form of professional and personal readiness for self-realization through personalisation process.

Psychological readiness of teachers for work in the conditions of inclusive education assumes "... possession of pedagogical technologies, knowledge of individual differences of children, readiness of teachers to model a lesson and use variability in the course of training etc". (Alekhina, Alekseeva & Agafonova, 2011).

Stability and quality of professional activity is caused by features of psychological readiness of the expert. Psychological readiness is a set of both internal and external conditions, first of all, personal qualities of the specialist teacher: intellectual, motivational, emotional and professional values, that provide readiness for professional activity. It is a certain internal confidence and determination, a condition of mobilization which is formed in the course of a vocational education and that provides success in activity. At the same time psychological readiness is a condition of efficiency of professional activity.

4. Features of psychological readiness of the teacher-psychologist to inclusive practices

Professional readiness of the teacher for inclusive practice in educational environment — is the level of his knowledge and professionalism which allows to make optimum decisions in a concrete pedagogical situation and which is presented by three groups of special competences: organizational and administrative, educational and methodical. Each block includes the list of professionally important qualities which have significant impact on efficiency of professional pedagogical activity. Professional readiness is a result of vocational training, quality of the personality and also acts as the regulator of success of professional activity.

5. Professional competence of psychological readiness of the teacher-psychologist

Psychological readiness of the educational psychologist for inclusive practice includes the following professional competences, which, as we think, can act as criteria of psychological readiness:

- to positively perceive and accept the child's with special educational needs,
- to competently carry out psychological-pedagogical support of children, parents, teachers,
- to use innovative technologies of implementation of professional activity,
- ability to predict, analyze and carry out the monitoring of teaching and educational process,
- ability to carry out self-control of professional activity,
- ability to choose adequate means and modern methods of self-management and self-development.

We will consider above-mentioned competences of professional activity of the educational psychologist on the basis of standard model of the expert with the higher pedagogical education.

Kotelnikov and Smirnova specify that the model of the expert has to reflect the volume and structure of the professional and social and psychological qualities, knowledge, abilities that in total represent the generalized social characteristic of the expert (Arkhangelskiy, 1980). It contains complete system of qualities of the individual necessary for the person of this profession.

6. The model of formation of psychological readiness of the teacher-psychologist

The structural model of formation of psychological readiness of educational psychologist for work with children in inclusive education consists of the following components:

- 1) motivational component;
- 2) cognitive component;
- 3) activity component;
- 4) value-meaning component;
- 5) emotional and connotative component.

For more evident representation of the model of psychological readiness of future educational psychologists for work with children we made the table of components and indicators of the structure of the considered phenomenon (table 1).

Table 1. The Model psychological readiness of future educational psychologists for the work with children under the conditions of inclusive education

Components	Indicators
Motivational component	conscious attitude of the educational psychologist to the need and conditions of the organization of inclusive education, desire of the educational psychologist to carry out integration of children with limited opportunities in secondary school, incentive to successfully carry out professional activity, realization of efforts to self
Cognitive component	knowledge of essence of inclusive education, options of its implementation, psychological
Activity component	ability to carry out pedagogical process within inclusive education, ability to organize psychological
Value-meaning component	understanding and acceptance of self and other person as unique substance, positive relation to the process of integration of children with limited opportunities into educational institutions, positive relation of educational psychologist to the process and content of professional activity, interest in its good results.

Emotional-connative component	ability to self-control, overcome of doubts, fear of failure, feeling of professional and social responsibility, confidence in success, enthusiasm.
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Research of structural components of psychological-pedagogical readiness of future educational psychologists for work under the conditions of inclusive education by the offered techniques allows to distribute all respondents according to the levels of formation of psychological readiness which characteristic is presented in the table 2.

Table 2. Levels of formation of psychological readiness of future pedagogs-psychologists for the work under the conditions of inclusive education

Levels	Characteristics of the levels of formation of psychological readiness
High	Ability of educational psychologist to distinguish nonverbal means of communication, to predict reactions of people on the basis of understanding of their feelings, thoughts, intentions, to give the correct psychological characteristic of the personality and collective. The tolerant attitude towards people, in particular to children with problems in development. To be able to productively interact and equally communicate both with children with deviations in health and their normally developing mates. High level of development of empathy: ability to empathy, sympathy, understanding of internal state of other person and ability to show emotional warm, friendliness, support. High aspiration to mastering professional knowledge, qualities, skills. High level of academic progress.
Middle	Good adaptation to society, but insufficient ability to predict behavior of people, their reactions in different situations of communication and interaction. The personality that has combination of positive qualities necessary for successful performance of professional activity: for example openness, emotional stability, consciousness and negative qualities: pliability, tendency to sense of guilt, dependence on group, lack of self-management, indifference. Unstable level of manifestation of tolerance to people that can lead to misunderstanding and conflict situations. Average level of development of empathy: inability to stand on a position of another person, not always understands internal state of the person, inability to give support always. Unstable professional motivation combining hopelessness in a professional choice.
Low	Unable to precisely build judgment about people, understand their nonverbal behavior, predict reactions in various circumstances that complicates relationship with other people. Absence of tolerance (intolerance) in communication with people, in particular with those with limited health abilities. There are such personality qualities which don't promote successful interaction with children with deviations in health: isolation, emotional instability, pliability, tendency to sense of guilt, dependence on group, lack of self-management, indifference. Low level of development of empathy, inability to identify and understand rational, emotional and intuitive channels. Low motivation to education and professional activity, money and prestige mindset in a professional life, fear to be rejected. Low level of academic progress, disinterest in mastering professional knowledge, skills, qualities.

6. Experimental study of psychological readiness of the teacher-psychologist to work in an inclusive environment.

For the purpose of identification of level of psychological readiness for work under the conditions of inclusive education and also for definition of a circle of tasks directed on formation of professional readiness of future educational psychologists for work under the conditions of the inclusive education we have conducted the pilot research of psychological readiness of future educational psychologists for work in the system of inclusive education with the students of 1-4 courses. In psychological research the methods and a questionnaireis were used to carry out the stating experiment. 87 students took part in psychological experiment.

Experimental work on research of the readiness of educational psychologists for future work in the system of inclusive education took place in several stages.

6.1. The first phase of the study

At a preparatory investigation phase theoretical research of a problem, studying and the analysis of scientific literature on a research subject were conducted. Also at this stage a selection of participants of the experiment was

defined. Selection of participants consisted of the students of the specialty "Pedagogics and Psychology" of the first to the fourth year. 87 students took part in psychological experiment.

6.2. The second phase of the study

At the second stage according to certain criteria the diagnostic program of research of the psychological-pedagogical readiness of future educational psychologists for work under the conditions of inclusive education was prepared with the students of the 1st and 4th courses that includes the following methods: An assessment mental tension" (T.A. Nemchin), "Ability of the teacher to empathy", "A sociability level assessment". The task was to determine the level of psychological – pedagogical readiness for work in system of inclusive education on each course of the specialty and also to look at changes of the psychologist – pedagogical readiness from a course to course that occur under the influence of disciplines provided by the state obligatory standard of education. The analysis of dynamics of levels of the psychological – pedagogical readiness of "Pedagogics and psychology" students from a course to a course was carried out.

7. Results of the study

Analysis of research of structural components of the psychological– pedagogical readiness for work under the conditions of inclusive education allowed to distribute the psychologist students – on the following levels of readiness.

High level of readiness is characterised for the students of the 4 courses. This category of students possess high level of social intelligence which allows to understand language of nonverbal communication, give fast and exact judgments about people, successfully predict their reactions in the certain circumstances, reveal foresight in the relations with others. Students with high level of readiness show tolerant attitude towards people, in particular to children with problems in development; personal qualities promote productive interaction also with children with special needs and with their normally developing mates, such as openness, emotional stability, consciousness, independence, self-management, strong will. Also their characterized with the high level of the development of empathy: identification and understanding of rational, emotional and intuitive channels.

The average level of readiness is characteristic for the students of the 2-3 courses. They are characterized with average level of social intelligence promoting good adaptation but insufficient for creation of exact judgments about behavior of people in different situations, in particular it concerns the children with deviations in development, who are especially distinguished with mismatch of verbal and nonverbal components of behavior. Students with average level of readiness possess both the personal qualities necessary for successful performance of professional activity (for example openness, emotional stability, consciousness) and such qualities that reduce overall performance of psychologist: pliability, tendency to sense of guilt, dependence on group, a lack of self-control, indifference. The average level of development of empathy is also a characteristic feature. Low level of readiness is characteristic for students of the 1 course. These respondents possess low level by all studied criteria: the low level of social intelligence which doesn't allow building quickly and precisely judgments about people, understand their nonverbal behavior, predict reactions in various circumstances that complicates relationship with all subjects of educational process of inclusive school; a low level of development of empathy, inability to sympathize and empathize with children with deviations in health and their parents. These respondent have such personality qualities which don't promote successful interaction with children with deviations in health: isolation, emotional instability, pliability, tendency to sense of guilt, lack of self-control, dependence on group (table 3).

Thus, studying psychological – pedagogical readiness of students of the educational psychologists revealed in average value low level of readiness for work with children with developmental problems. This circumstance demands the development of system of training of specialists who could work successfully in the system of inclusive education.

Table 3. Levels of psychological-pedagogical readiness of the educational psychology students of the 1-4 course in the system of inclusive education

Courses	Levels of psychological-pedagogical readiness
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	High	Middle	Low
1 course			38
2 course		44	
3 course		44,2	
4 course	46,3		

According to the results of methods: "Assessment mental tension" an average value made up - 53,8% that characterizes moderate or intensive tension, so levels of mental tension made up: on 1 course – 60 points, 2nd course - 56 points, 3rd course – 51 points, 4th course – 48 points. Analyzing data on "Ability of the teacher to empathy" methods the coefficient of average values – 47,6% was revealed. Depending on the course the level of empathy consists of: 1 course - 47,6 points, 2nd course – 57 points, 3rd course – 63, 4 course – 73 points. This indicator testifies to the normal level of empathy, they are characterized with emotional manifestation, but mostly they all maintain their self-control. In communication they are attentive, try to understand more than was told by words. They do not belong to especially sensitive persons. They prefer not to state delicately their point of view, without being assured that it will be accepted. There is no relaxedness of feelings and this disturbs full-fledged perception of people.

Indicators according to "Sociability level assessment" made up 17% that characterizes such qualities as skill to communicate, inquisitiveness, patience in communication with others, ability to listen to the interesting persons. Thus, at the first course the level of sociability made up – 24, at the second year-22, at the third year – 20, fourth course - 18 points. (fig. 1)

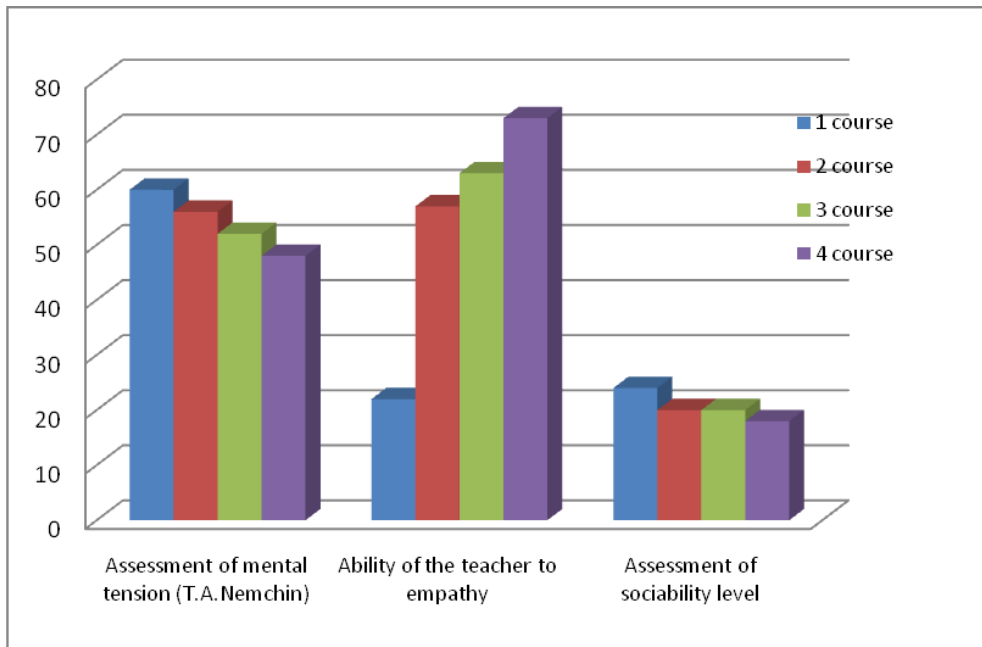


Figure 1. Indicators of psychological-pedagogical readiness of the students of the 1-4 course

8. Conclusions

Proceeding from the pilot study conducted by us it is possible to draw the following conclusions according to the average values: "Assessment of mental tension" methods-moderate mental tension is observed, which is expressed in a quiet and balanced mental state. Analyses of "Ability of the teacher to empathy" methods testifies to the normal level of empathy that is professionally important quality of the educational psychologist for their

professional activity. "The sociability level assessment" shows average value on formation of communicative competence of future educational psychologists.

Thus, modern domestic researches indicate the need for carrying out specially organized work on training of educational psychologists for inclusive education. Special relevance in this context is gained by a problem of studying of professional readiness of future educational psychologists beginning from the first and ending with the fourth year to work in the conditions of the integrated education. As introduction of inclusive education affects activity of school psychologists.

This circumstance demands special development of the system of education of specialists who could work in the system of inclusive education, in this regard the following main objectives were set:

- formation of motivation to the work with children with deviations in health, development of social motives ;
- formation of tolerant attitude towards disabled children and their parents, development of professionally important qualities of the personality necessary for work in the system of inclusive education (readiness for cooperation, emotional stability, consciousness, independence, reflection);
- development of ability to empathize, formation of mindset of acceptance of children special needs;
- formation of ideas of system of inclusive education, tasks, methods and means of psychological-pedagogical support and on this basis formation and development of cognitive availability for the work of the psychologist in this educational system.

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